



Accelerating School Meals Programmes in Lao PDR and Sierra Leone

A Joint Effort by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the World Food Programme (WFP) | April 2025

HIGHLIGHTS

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is providing EUR 22 million to support the World Food Programme (WFP) and the School Meals Coalition (SMC) in implementing a five-year project (2023-2028) to strengthen national school meals programmes in Lao PDR and Sierra Leone, both members of the SMC. The goal of this project is to support the transformation of food systems, the resilience of communities and the strengthening of human capital in two countries, through sustainable school meals programmes.

This project fosters sustainable home-grown school feeding (HGSF) models to enhance nutrition, education, and food systems, while reinforcing government capacities to ensure sustainability. There is robust evidence that school meal programmes can support local agriculture, access to markets and healthy diets while simultaneously improving health, nutrition, and education, thereby making communities more resilient. HGSF programmes can also transform lives, particularly women's lives, and communities and serve as platforms to address some of the challenges in today's food systems.

The initiative also invests in evidence generation and long-term financing strategies, with support to key initiatives coordinated by the School Meals Coalition Secretariat, including the Sustainable Financing Initiative (SFI) for School Health and Nutrition and the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition (RC). This work is coordinated with support and expertise from the School Meals Coalition Secretariat, hosted by WFP at its Headquarters in Rome

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Establish nutrition-sensitive, climate-smart, equitable, and sustainable school meals programmes.

- Strengthen community capacities to support national school meals through HGSF.
- Develop long-term financing strategies, leveraging support from the Sustainable Financing Initiative (SFI).
- Ensure that the learning from this partnership is captured and disseminated as part of its 'Diets and Food Systems Community of Practice' led by the Research Consortium (RC).

ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Home-Grown School Feeding Implementation
 - Supporting **smallholder farmers** to supply food through strengthened local food systems.
 - Expanding access to **energy-efficient stoves** and water supply through climate-smart solutions.
 - Promoting **women's economic empowerment** across food production and school meals.
 - Upgrading **school infrastructure**, including kitchens, storage facilities, and hygiene conditions.
2. Capacity Strengthening & Policy Support
 - Providing technical assistance to government-led HGSF programmes.
 - Establishing **national financing strategies** for long-term sustainability.
 - Strengthening **research and expanding analysis to improve policymaking** on school meals.
 - Strengthening **data systems & monitoring** through digital tools.

Accelerating School Meals Programmes In Partnership with **BMZ**

SCHOOL MEALS COALITION COLLABORATION

- The School Meals Coalition is ensuring political momentum and global alignment.
- Government engagement supporting a gradual transition to full national ownership.
- The Sustainable Financing Initiative for School Health and Nutrition will support both countries in financing school meals long-term and is developing a research paper comprising of Case Studies on Procurement and Financing of Home-Grown School Feeding.
- The Research Consortium is conducting impact studies and generating evidence around school meals.

COUNTRY - LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

Lao PDR

In Numbers

- 200 schools targeted, reaching 22,600 students.
- 2,000 smallholder farmers engaged in local food production.
- 1,000 school cooks trained and supported.
- Energy-efficient cooking technologies and water systems introduced in 200 schools.

Direct Implementation

- Support to increase small holder farmer production.
- Provide additional cash to school to procure food commodities from local farmers for school lunch.
- Support Village Education Development Committees (VEDC) to manage financial resources to supply nutritious meals.
- Implement a Social and Behavior Change communication (SBCC) campaign targeting schools and communities to raise awareness of health and nutrition.
- Support school infrastructure to facilitate safe and hygienic cooking.
- Improve cooking stoves at schools.
- Improve water accessibility at schools.
- Women's economic empowerment through value chain participation and access to resources.
- Design sustainable cooks' compensation mechanism as an extra income.
- Strengthen existing School Lunch Programme (SLP) monitoring system.
- Establish multiyear school feeding strategies and provide robust analysis of funding landscape through sustainable financing initiative.



Sierra Leone

In Numbers:

- 115 schools targeted, benefiting around 34,000 students.
- 8,000 smallholder farmers engaged in local food production
- 510 MT quantity of food distributed sourced through HGSF.
- USD 106,000 of cash-based transfers made through mobile money to strengthen financial transparency.
- 56 kitchens and storerooms constructed, with energy-saving stoves installed.

Direct Implementation

- Provision of nutritious meal to school children.
- Support smallholder women and men farmers.
- Construct school infrastructure to facilitate safe and hygienic cooking.
- Implement a comprehensive Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) to address discriminatory social norms.
- Empower cooks with knowledge and skills on hygienic food preparation and nutrition.
- Strengthen national systems through development of guidelines, norms, and standards.
- Strengthen National Knowledge Management and Monitoring Systems.

For further information, please contact

WFP Berlin Office: berlin.gp@wfp.org